

Meeting: Congleton Partnership Executive

Date: 06.04.2022 **Time:** 5:30 pm **Location:** Zoom

In attendance: Cathy Dean, Peter Aston, Kay Wesley, Bob Edwards, Patti Pinto, Jackie MacArthur, Susan Munro, Linda Hulse, Steve Foster, Diane Ritherdon, Margaret Gartside, Amanda Martin.

Item	Agenda Item / discussion	Action / comment
1	<p><u>Welcome and Introduction.</u> Peter chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees; the meeting was changed to a zoom meeting due to high covid rates, we wish members a speedy recovery who couldn't attend.</p>	
2.	<p><u>Apologies</u> Glen Williams, Suzy Firkin, Peter Hall, John Davies.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Partnership Vision</u></p> <p>A small working group has been meeting regularly since January to decide the future direction of the partnership and streamline processes.</p> <p>Peter discussed the initial vision and objectives, in principle with the group agreed, but there was a little confusion between the vision and objectives. Cathy / Peter to re-work and present back to the group.</p> <p>Objectives should aspirational but measurable.</p> <p>Working with 'surrounding parishes' is mentioned a lot – what's the best way to include and work with surrounding parishes? The approach will be on individual projects.</p>	

4.	<p>Town Centre Report - Jackie MacArthur April 2022</p> <p>1. Town Centre:</p> <p>Pleased to report we have a new Town Centre and Events Officer. Rachel McCarthy took over the role in February 2022 after Martha moved on to a new role at Sandbach school. Rachel is working with town centre businesses and on events and used to own and manage Quigley's on West Street.</p> <p>Retail changes:</p> <p>Generally, feels like an uplift of interest in the town with many of the empty premises attracting interest from potential new businesses. Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher Ground opened in the Former Royal Bank of Scotland • Stevenson Browne opened in the Co-op Building, High Street • Black Circle Coffee shop, Swanbank • Little Street Cellar Bar, Capital Walk and improved Beartown Brewery soon to open • David James menswear has closed on Swan Bank • Bear Grills has changed its days and opening hours to accommodate less footfall in town during the week. <p>Activities</p> <p>Easter Treats day was a success in the town centre. 37 businesses took part in the hop around the shops and 58 young people completed the trail on day 1. Open until the 19th April (UPDATE 183 completed the trail)</p> <p>Elizabeth Statue – fantastic unveiling in town on the 8th March. Lovely to see so many people stop to touch the statue and read about her.</p> <p>750 activities starting to take shape:</p>	ALL

- 30 Town Centre flags briefly went up in the Town Centre and will go back up in May.
- All the banners for Mountbatten Way, Market Street and West Street have been sold.
- Appointed an Ale Taster and attracted national news
- Beating of the Bounds walk on Sunday 10th April – around 250 signed up
- Working on producing an Ale Trail in May
- Working on a Jubilee Party in the Park in June
- Working on the Schools Living History event for July
- Working on the grand medieval festival in the park for August
- Working on a medieval Banquet for September
- Working on a Beer Festival for October.

UKRAINE

Fast-moving project. Working with CEC who will take the lead on all the practicalities of families coming over - safeguarding, schools, access to services, funding guests, sorting payments for host families. The role of Town and Parish Councils to make them feel welcome and the hosts feel supported.

Bear Necessities

Working on next edition which needs to go to the printers by the 22 April and will be distributed from the 5th of May.

Community Governance

Big issue for Congleton. After initially being told that the boundary would be the Link Road, Cheshire East has had a change of heart and is now recommending that the boundaries stay the same and that the new employment land and houses within the link road will form part of the rural parishes. The Town Council is challenging this. It means that the new households will not pay any precept towards costs of running Congleton – green spaces, park, paddling pool, CCTV, PCSOs, grants, street cleaning and projects to improve the town – such as subsidising community events in the Town Hall.

	<p>It also means that people moving into the new estates immediately next to the current boundary will have no say on how the town develops or access to support from the Town Council. David McGifford is working on our response, and I know would appreciate support from the Partnership on this.</p>	
5.	<p>Group Updates</p> <p>CSG 15 memberships forms have been received and a draft constitution has been circulated for comment since January. The next meeting will look to formally call an AGM and adopt the constitution. Currently concentrating on household plastics and climate change. CSG will link into the marketing plan that the Congleton Green Group has put together.</p> <p>Tree Group Approx. 15,000 plants/trees were planted, an amazing achievement thanks to a large group of volunteers and lots of hard work, fantastic effort!</p> <p>For the TREE TOTALISER Actual 2019/20 1364 (5% target); actual 20/21 5282 (18%); actual 21/22 8004 (27%) =51% target Remainder 14639 (49% of 30,000 target)</p> <p>Full Tree report is available on the CSG minutes dated 05.04.22 on the Congleton Partnership website.</p> <p>Green Fayre / Climate Festival Week. A joint project between CTC and Partnership due in 2022 (September), all aspects of sustainability. Need to set up a working group to deliver this event.</p>	

Congleton Hydro

The Hydro scheme is going well, Cumulative Energy Generated to the End of March 2022 was 139.1 MWh. £4000 in community grants was made available through the MWMF, the funds are to be used for green projects in the town.

Building on the success of Congleton Hydro, the team behind it have secured £100K funding to develop a brand-new renewable energy scheme. The grant funding is from RCEF –Regional Communities Energy Fund. This time the goal will be to generate power from both hydro and solar sources. The hydro scheme will be located beside the weir near Congleton Park. The solar arrays will be positioned on the roofs of suitable private and public buildings around Congleton. Apart from generating carbon-free energy, the scheme will provide a focal point for promoting sustainability within the community and an educational resource. Surplus funds from selling the electricity will be directed into community projects.

The team is currently looking for more volunteers to help steer the new project run independently of DVCE Ltd.

Senior Forum

Buddy & Befriending project had the second quarterly review, they have met or have already exceeded the targets agreed:
Targets:

1. To actively promote the Buddying & Befriending Scheme across the Congleton area to increase awareness of the service to potential referral sources and clients.
2. To recruit 13 volunteer Buddies and Befrienders to support Congleton residents
3. To match an additional 15 clients in the Congleton Town area referred into the Scheme with a Volunteer Befriender over and above 2021 baseline figures.

Overall Referrals Target	Referrals first quarter	Referrals to date
15	8	17

Overall Matches Target	Matches Achieved First Quarter	Matches Achieved to date
15	5	15

Overall Volunteer Sign-Up Target	Volunteer Sign-Up First Quarter	Volunteer Sign-ups to date
13	5	11

£1792 was paid as the second instalment as targets have been met. (Paid 12th April)

Community Health and Wellness Fayre took place on the 29th of March, we had around 140 visitors and 40 exhibitors. Covid rates were still high, so it was a good turnout. We had some great feedback from exhibitors. The time was extended until 2 pm but it was very quiet after 1 pm. We did receive some negative comments on Facebook about the timing of the event as people are at work.

Dementia Friendly Congleton

The Swap Shop activity in the library has been used well, with Twiddle Muffs being the main item of interest. Most activities are starting back up again, although all suffer from a lack of volunteers. Dementia Friends is based on the Alzheimers society, they have now changed the rules and are wanting Dementia Champions to commit to 6 fundraising events in the year, this has been met with some resistance. Diane is currently contacting all existing Dementia Champions, they have to commit by the end of July.

Discussion took place around how we could continue without being aligned with the Alzheimer's society, what are other towns/groups doing? The fundraising rules are quite flexible so could we piggyback on existing events?

AMI Volunteer Project

We have received grant funding from Cheshire East of £17500 to run the volunteer coordinator project. Alison is continuing her excellent work from the Old Sawmill meals/befriending scheme. We are having some system problems so hopefully more to report next time!

Elizabeth Group

A very successful unveiling day was held on IWD 8th March, Baroness Hale was brilliant on the day. Elizabeth is now happily situated in Congleton Town Centre, it's great to see all the interest and selfies taken! A massive well done to all involved. The group is taking a breather before committing to any more projects but looking to continue with Elizabeth's day.

Youth Forum

Discussions with the school confirmed the old format wasn't working, they want it to be more curriculum led, discussions with Patti/Glen confirmed they are very keen on green issues, biodiversity, saving energy etc.

Congleton Creative.

A very successful unplugged weekend was held in March, the town was very busy.

The Electric Picture House is hosting a theatre performance on Saturday at 7.30pm.

Will Jackson has accidentally stolen 300-second-class stamps from the post office. But he's making them count. He's going to write letters. From reconnecting with old friends and ex-boyfriends to run-ins with the marketing department at John Lewis, stamp collecting has never looked so sexy...

"A Rising Comic Star" – Attitude Magazine

Based on real-life correspondences; storytelling and lipsync cabaret collide in this queer coming-of-age comedy about the complications of 21st-century communication.

Ticket £10 available from The Electric Picture House email: electricpicturehouse@gmail.com tel no 01260 270908

Congleton Pride

Congleton Pride event Saturday 23 July 2022, lots of exciting things planned.

Anyone experiencing hate crime who isn't confident in reporting to the police can now report to the pride group online.
Could we have a physical location in the town?

6. **Finance Report**

Attached with the minutes.

Total receipts	Sub total	102,212.82
Total Expenditure	Total expenditure for the period	£44,717.77
	Balance held in the account	£57,495.05
Projects Agreed		£35,500

7. **A.O.B**

In Bloom's activity picking up, the in bloom group would like to encourage every resident to plant a tree. Work with CSG group/Tree Group

Inclusive Roundabout Project – The Partnership is currently in a crowdfunding campaign to raise funds to install an inclusive roundabout in Congleton Park, applications to the Town Trust & Inclosure Trust have not been successful due to a technicality around the funding process, not on the merits of the project which is extremely disappointing.

To be successful in attracting funding from Cheshire East (up to 10k) we need to demonstrate lots of local support, please consider making a small donation (the minimum amount is £2) this can be anonymous.

Please visit the crowdfunding page: <https://www.spacehive.com/congleton-inclusive-play>

ALL

And any ideas on how we can raise the funds are gratefully received 😊

8. **Next Meeting TBC**